Bronze Age Oracle / Hexagram 49

7, Troop 709
09, Small Shepherd's
('November, 20-20')

Nine in Fifth Place

A big man,
In a
Tiger Transformation.
Before Divination,
Captives.

Tigers are awe-inspiring creatures and, together with Dragons, seem to have acted as protectors of clans (and their kings and leaders) in ancient China. The Tiger Hunt was an important activity in Shang times, and is mentioned in Oracle Bone Inscriptions: "The King hunted and captured two tigresses, one rhinoceros, twenty-one deer, two boar, one hundred and twenty-seven young deer, two tigers, twenty-three hares, twenty-seven pheasants. In the eleventh month." Rutt suggests for this Line Statement a Ritual in which animals were impersonated. Could the "big man" be a Shaman? Could this be a fragmentary reference to an ancient shamanistic performance, in which the Shaman is possessed by (and dresses up as) a Tiger Spirit? Such a ceremony might have been the prelude to Ritual Sacrifice of human captives, prelude to Divination, with the same big man, the Tiger-Priest, presiding at all stages. Sarah Allan writes of the Man-in-a-Tiger's-Mouth motif found on early bronzes, especially on the *yue*-axes, a man's head flanked by two symmetrical Tigers with encircling maws. These axes (the ancient graph for *yue* was an axe held over a man) may have been used for the ceremonial execution of humans or animals. As K. C. Chang had already observed, the open mouth occurs in many cultures as a symbol of passage to the other world, and the man held in the Tiger's Mouth may indeed have been a *wu*, a Sorcerer or Shaman. Tiger skins are also mentioned in early texts and in a Bronze Inscription, for use in court costume and chariot canopies.

('As Kaballah Chris had already observed . . .')

Six in Top Place

A noble man,
In a
Leopard Transformation.

A small man,
In a
Mask of Hide.